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SCIENCE

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ADDRESS TO THE MATHEMATICAL AND PHYSICAL SECTION OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE¹

SINCE the last meeting of our association one of the most illustrious of the British workers in science during the nineteenth century has been removed from us by the death of Sir William Huggins. In the middle of the last century Sir William Huggins commenced that pioneer work of examination of the spectra of the stars which has insured for him enduring fame in connection with the foundation of the science of astrophysics. The exigencies of his work of analysis of the stellar spectra led him to undertake a minute examination of the spectra of the elements with a view to the determination of as many lines as possible. To the spectroscope he later added the photographic film as an instrument of research in his studies of the heavenly bodies. In 1864 Sir William Huggins made the important observation that many of the nebulae have spectra which consist of bright lines; and two years later he observed, in the case of a new star, both bright and dark lines in the same spectrum. In 1868 his penetrating and alert mind made him the first to perceive that the Doppler principle could be applied to the determination of the velocities of stars in the line of sight, and he at once set about the application of the method. His life-work, in a domain of absorbing interest, was rewarded by a rich harvest of discovery, obtained as the result of most patient and minute investigations. The "Atlas of Representative Stellar Spectra," published

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¹ Sheffield, 1910.